

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7366

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 0834

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VE

SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN CABINET ABOUT TO BE REORGANIZED

REF: CARACAS 213 AND 12708

EL UNIVERSAL OF JANUARY 22 REPORTS THAT THE VENEZUELAN CABINET IS IN THE THROES OR REORGANIZATION, AND THAT IT HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED THAT INTERIOR MINISTER LUIS PINERUA ORDAZ AND AGRICULTURE MINISTER LUIS JOSE OROPEZA HAVE RESIGNED. REPORTEDLY NO SUCCESSORS HAVE YET BEEN NAMED.

2. PRESIDENT PEREZ IS SHORTLY EXPECTED FORMALLY TO ANNOUNCE THE CABINET CHANGES.

3. COMMENT: RUMORS HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING HERE WITH GROWING INSISTENCE FOR THE PAST TWO WEEKS (REFTELS) THAT THE CABINET WAS ABOUT TO BE RESHUFFLED. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY SOURCES, PINERUA ORDAZ IS LEAVING THE CABINET TO RUN FOR SECRETARY GENERAL OF ACCION DEMOCRATICA, AND WILL BE REPLACED AS INTERIOR MINISTER BY OCTAVIO LEPAGE, PRESENT AD SECRETARY GENERAL, WHO WILL THROW HIS SUPPORT TO PINERUA. OUR SOURCES ALSO ADVISE THAT FOREIGN MINISTER SCHACHT IS ABOUT TO BE REPLACED, THE MOST LIKELY CANDIDATE BEING SECRETARY GENERAL TO THE PRESIDENCY RAMON ESCOVAR SALOM (WHO IS ANXIOUS FOR THE JOB). HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, PRESIDENT PEREZ IS HAVING DIFFICULTY IN MAKING UP HIS MIND WHO
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HE WANTS TO REPLACE ESCOVAR IN THE POWERFUL AND SENSITIVE POSITION

OF SECRETARY GENERAL TOT THE PRESIDENCY. MENTIONED AS
ESCOVAR'S SUCCESSOR ARE FEDERAL DISTRICT GOVERNOR DIEGO ARRIA
AND AD DEPUTY AND EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE PARTY'S NATIONAL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE JOSE ANGEL CILIBERTO. PERHAPS ANOTHER REASON
FOR THE DELAY IN REPLACING SCHACHT IS THAT SINCE HE IS CURRENTLY
INVOLVED IN THE OFFICIAL VISIT OF PRINCE BERNHARDT OF THE NETHERLANDS,

IT COULD BE EMBARRASSING TO SACK HIM IN THE MIDST OF THE VISIT.
MCCLINTOCK

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